"the claims of the Colonization Society upon the patronage of the people & government of the United States."

To promote the happiness of our fellow creatures, is a duty devolving on every rational being. This is a principle clearly recognized in Scripture, & in strict accordance with reason. We are called to do good, not only to those, who are of the household of faith, but to all Men; & it is presumed, those that are the most unable to aid themselves, call for our first attention. It will not be necessary, I trust, at this time, to bring to view the various operations of this Society since its Commencement, as, it would, probably, Consume too much of our time, at least, for the present occasion. I shall, therefore, enter immediately on the claims of this Society, whose best interests, I believe, we are all ready, or should be ready, to promote in the best possible manner. The Colonization Society of the U. S. was formed for the express purpose of meliorating the Condition of the Africans: a class of our fellow creatures, that have long been neglected by the whites, & whose conduct in this particular, deserves the severest reprehension. I am called this afternoon, my dear Brethren, to plead the Cause, & urge the claims of a people, who like ourselves, have immortal souls to be saved, or, to perish for ever. With what feelings, then, ought I to enter on this important, & I may add, sacred duty; doubtless, they should be such, as the nature of this subject demands. Let us then, for a few moments, Consider the claims of this Soc: upon the patronage & support of the people & Government of the United States. My first remark is, that the Africans as immortal beings, claim our warmest patronage. They are rational creatures, & as such, are capable, many of them, of making attainments in science & literature, if proper means are afforded them. We labor

(A few things however will be first premised, before I enter upon the claims of this Society.)

under a great mistake if we think this class of people are naturally incapable of rising to any eminence in the literary world. We know that facts, assure us, that the Converse of this sentiment, is correct. If then this people are in possession of those natural talents, by the cultivation of which, they may be rendered Competent, to discharge the higher duties of life, what reason can we, or the people of the United States, assign, for neglecting those benevolent plans, which by the blessing of heaven, would accomplish so desirable a purpose. We know very well, my brethren, that this people have not the means in their own power, to afford them, even a Common education at least this is the case, with the majority of them. How then I ask, are these unhappy, and degraded people, to be Res-cued from the thraldom into which they are now plunged? How are their minds to be expanded, to Contemplate the wonders of redeeming grace & dying love. Surely, not while they are groping, in heathenish darkness, as it were, relative to their immortal Souls, beyond the grave. Surely, not while they are incapable of reading the Bible & thus becoming acquainted with the plan of redemption. No; they must be instructed, the means of education must be afforded them, & they must be placed in a situation favorable, to the culture of their minds, else, this end can never be attained. If then, we would regard their best interests, if we would see them preparing for usefulness & happiness on earth, & especially, if we would see them preparing for an inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, & that fadeth not away; we must furnish them, & that immediately too, with those means, that will lead them to the fountain of happiness, whence springs of consolation, may abou

to them, even as to others. Thousands, of these unhappy beings, even, in this favoured land of light & liberty, have gone down to the grave, without one ray of hope to illumine their dreary way thro' the dark valley. They have lived, & died, like the beasts, that perish. No kind herald of salvation, was ever sent to them, to assure them, that there is "balm in Gilead & a physician there, that Jesus Christ came into the world to seek & to save them, which are lost;" Alas! my dear brethren, who does not pity their deplorable state, Who would not ~~extend~~ use their talents, & property, & influence to raise these wretched beings, from their state of degradation. It is indeed high time that we were all awake to this momentous subject. My second remark is, that the Africans, as social beings, have the tenderest claims on the people of the United States. We are all creatures of habit, & formed for society, but if we expect happiness from one another, we must be in possession of those principles, & that knowledge, which will render us useful to each other. Now, I affirm, that hundreds, yea, even thousands of these unhappy beings, have no more correct ideas about the supreme being, & the immortality of the soul, than the brute creation, & in this sad condition they live & die, their state beyond the grave, is known only to him, in whose hand are all the destinies of Men. To be convinced capable, therefore, of promoting each others happiness, & to enjoy the sweets arising from enlightened intercourse, they must as social beings, be taught how these blessings may be enjoyed. It will be perceived, & it has been perceived, that the foregoing sentiments, have relation to the Africans as a people, rather, than to the claims of the Col: Soc: upon the patronage, of the people & Government of the U. S. I have taken this course, however, for the purpose of showing

as I hope more clearly, the Reasonableness of these claims. This So-ciety as I have before observed was formed expressly for the free African people of our Country, & all those who may be permitted to enjoy the blessings of the Society. As it respects the claims of this Soc: upon the people of the U. S. they must, I think, be obvious to every reflecting mind. If this Soc: is not countenanced by the people of our Country, by whom, I would ask, will it be Countenanced? Persons of other Countries, it is true, have done, & may do considerable for promoting the best interests of this Society, but we have no special claims upon their patronage, for they have Societies, similar to this among themselves, which claim their attention & support. The claims then, which this Society has on the U. S. are imperative, & here I would observe, that it should never be forgotten that the white people themselves are to be greatly benefitted by this Society. It is well known that our Country is rapidly increasing in population, & I need not say here, that the increase of the Colored people is as large, & perhaps larger, in proportion to their number, than the whites, & that they are remarkably prolific, none will doubt, as long as they remain in this Village, or even elsewhere, if they are careful observers of their families. It is true indeed, the sacred Command "Be ye fruitful, multiply & replenish the earth, extends to them as well as to the whites, & neither of them, I suppose, are lacking in their attention to this duty. Since then, the people of the U. S. are to be so much benefitted by this So-c: & that this will be the case, needs no argument to prove it; We ought then as a people to use the most strenuous exertions to aid this Society. It is impossible, to tell, how much injury the Africans would do to the people of this Country, if they should be permitted to remain here, & increase as fast for twenty years to come, as

they have in the same time that is past. We Know that they have made attempts to destroy the whites by Hundreds, & if one of their base & cruel projects had taken effect, or rather, if they had not been detected, in this nefarious design, the consequences would have been indeed lamentable in the extreme. Accounts of their murdering their Masters & other whites, are by no means seldom & I have no doubt in proportion as they are enlightened & retained in the condition in which many of them are now placed, in the same proportion, their atrocious crimes will be multiplied. What then must be done; We must do our duty, & leave the Consequences with God. We must further the means now in operation, in the best possible manner. That the Government of the United States should aid this important Society is a duty so manifest, that it seems hardly necessary to dwell upon it. This Society claims the patronage of our Government, from the fact, that ~~this Society~~ it contemplates the peace & happiness of this favoured land. It was for the public good that this Soc: was established, as well as the best interests of the Africans. No one will doubt then for a moment, that the Government of the U. S. should be prompt in rendering that aid to this Soc: which it may demand; besides, this Society is now, as it were, in its incipient State & it needs in a peculiar sense the aid of our country. Many other reasons might be mentioned, why this Soc: has claims upon the patronage of the people & Government of the U. S. but our time at present will not permit. In view then, of the few remarks that have already been made, I would say, that We

my brethren as individuals have much to do, in promoting the welfare of this Soc: We, Know how to appreciate, in some degree at least, the blessings of the Gospel, & the inestimable blessings of the Gospel, we are now preparing to disseminate, wherever God in his holy providence may Call us. Let us then never forget the poor Africans; in whatever station we may be called to labour, let the ~~Cause~~ welfare of this unhappy people be near our hearts. If we are what we profess to be, & if we live to enter into the holy Ministry, we shall doubtless have the opportunity of doing much for this Society, Let us then, be of one heart & one mind in this important duty, & whatsoever our hands findeth to do, Let us do it with our might; for there is no work, nor device, nor Knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither we, are swiftly hastening.

Chas. Thompson.

Princeton, August 2nd 1824.